A

SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE CHAPEL OF THE

ASYLUM FOR FEMALE ORPHANS,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

GUARDIANS OF THAT CHARITY,

MAY 19, 1773.

By BEILBY PORTEUS, D. D.
Rector of St. Mary, Lambeth,
And Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

FREDERICK LORD NORTH,

PRESIDENT;

The Right Honourable Lord VERE,
The Right Hon. and Right Rev. Lord JAMES BEAUCLERK,
Sir ARCHER CROFT, Bart.
Sir CHARLES KEMEYS TYNTE, Bart.
Sir JAMES DASHWOOD, Bart.
ASSHETON CURZON, Esq.
} Vice-Presidents.

AND THE REST OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE

ASYLUM FOR FEMALE ORPHANS,

THIS SERMON,

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST, IS,

WITH GREAT RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT

AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

LUKE vi. 30.

GIVE TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH OF THEE.

THIS paſſage is evidently one, amongſt many others of the ſame kind in holy writ, that muſt be underſtood with ſome limitations. Were we to take it in its utmoſt latitude, and GIVE without diſtinction TO EVERY ONE THAT ASKED US, we ſhould very ſoon be diſabled from giving to ANY ONE; and thus by adhering too cloſely to the letter of the law, ſhould totally defeat the ſpirit and intention of it.

We may be very ſure therefore that our Lord could not mean to enjoin what was in its own nature abſurd and impracticable. And from conſidering the whole turn of the diſcourſe from whence theſe words are taken, and the perſons to whom they were addreſſed, the true ſenſe of the precept appears to be nothing more than this; that we ought not to circumſcribe our charity (as the Jews were apt to do) within the narrow circle of our own relations, friends,

neighbours, or countrymen, but ſhould extend it occaſionally, as far as reaſon requires, and our circumſtances allow, to all ſorts of perſons that ſtand in need of our aſſiſtance. This, you ſee, does by no means require us to ſatisfy every demand, without exception, that the poor think fit to make upon us. For though we ought to be charitably diſpoſed towards all; and ſhould ſuffer no conſiderations of place or perſon, of ſect or party, to exclude any one from a due ſhare of our bounty; yet on other accounts we lawfully may, and indeed are in conſcience bound to ſet ſome limits to our beneficence. A profuſe and indiſcriminate generoſity muſt quickly terminate in the impoveriſhment of our own families, for whom we are obliged in the firſt place to provide; and, by making no diſtinction betwixt the worthy and the worthleſs, would give encouragement to idleneſs, hypocriſy and vice, which the goſpel can never be ſuppoſed to command or allow. It is, therefore, not only conſiſtent with the direction given in the text, but a duty which we owe both to ourſelves and the public, to uſe ſome diſcretion and care in the exerciſe of our charity; to ſelect out of the vaſt multitude of claimants, as many of the moſt deſerving as we can prudently afford to relieve; and even amongſt theſe to beſtow the largeſt ſhare of our favours, where they are likely to be productive of the greateſt good.

There

There cannot then, perhaps, be a more uſeful way of employing the preſent time, than by endeavouring to aſſiſt your judgments in the right diſpoſal of your charitable donations. It is indeed almoſt the only thing that a preacher has to do on theſe occaſions. That ſpirit of univerſal philanthropy, which our Saviour meant to recommend in the text, is now (God be thanked) ſo generally prevalent among us; and there is in all ranks of people ſo ready a diſpoſition to relieve every ſpecies of diſtreſs, wherever it occurs, to the utmoſt of their power; that there is very little need to inculcate on our hearers the obligations they are under in this reſpect. The chief thing neceſſary is, not ſo much to urge them to do good, as to ſhow them how they may do the moſt good; in what way they can beſtow their alms to the greateſt advantage.

With a view then of giving you the beſt and the cleareſt directions on this head that I am able, I ſhall firſt endeavour to fix on ſuch marks and criterions as ought to guide you in the choice of proper objects, and ſhall then prove that theſe marks are all to be found in the Asylum for Female Orphans.

Now the firſt ground of preference in the diſtribution of our alms is evidently *the greatneſs and urgency of the*

evil to be removed. There can be no doubt but that they who ſtand moſt in need of immediate relief, and to whom, if refuſed, the conſequences will be moſt fatal, have the beſt claim to our aſſiſtance. There is indeed a variety of caſes where the diſtreſs is not of the worſt kind, and yet where a little ſeaſonable generoſity may be of the utmoſt ſervice: as when ſome preſſing occaſion requires us to aſſiſt our relations, friends or dependants in ſtraights or difficulties; when there is an opportunity of ſetting out young people advantageouſly in the world; when it is in our power to extricate a worthy perſon from ſome great inconvenience, or procure him ſome ſignal benefit; and in many other inſtances of the ſame kind. Exigences ſuch as theſe are without diſpute moſt powerful calls on the tenderneſs of thoſe who happen to be peculiarly intereſted in them. But undoubtedly the firſt and principal claim to the compaſſion of all in general is that of extreme poverty, or an abſolute want of the common neceſſaries of life. Wherever this is found, the neceſſity of relieving it is urgent and apparent. Other wants may be imaginary or ſupportable, this is real and intolerable. The evils ariſing from it are ſuch as human nature dreads moſt, and yet may in general be removed or alleviated at the eaſieſt rate. For a benefaction which would be ſcarce felt or acknowledged by one in tolerable circumſtances, would to a truly

indigent

indigent man be an inexpreſſible comfort. When ſuch a one therefore ASKS, we ought certainly to GIVE; and the nearer any one approaches to that ſtate, the more worthy is he of our kindeſt notice. But beſides thoſe wants that relate to the body, it ſhould never be forgot (though it is what we are too apt to forget) that there are others which concern the ſoul, ſtill more dreadful, and ſtill more ſtrongly entitled to compaſſion and relief. There are numbers of unhappy creatures, who, in a religious as well as a worldly ſenſe, are WRETCHED AND MISERABLE AND POOR AND BLIND AND NAKED;* and what is ſtill more deplorable, ſcarce know, perhaps, that they are ſo. Indeed it commonly happens that temporal and ſpiritual neceſſities go together; and they who cannot procure the means of preſent ſubſiſtence, are ſeldom furniſhed with the knowledge requiſite for eternal life. When this is the caſe, it affords an opportunity of ſhewing infinitely greater kindneſs to thoſe that ſolicit our charity, than they themſelves have any idea of. Their thoughts ſcarce ever reach beyond the feelings of the moment, and the hopes of immediate relief. But ours ought to extend much farther. We ſhould take a generous advantage of their preſent diſtreſs to promote their everlaſting welfare; and look forwards to heavenly bleſſings whilſt we are beſtowing earthly ones. By beginning firſt with theſe, we may open ourſelves a way into

* Rev. iii. 17.

into their hearts, and prepoſſeſs them in favour of every thing we have to ſay. They will readily ſubmit their faults to the correction of that hand, which POURS OIL INTO THEIR WOUNDS* ; and the inſtructions of religion will ſink deep into a heart which is previouſly ſoftened with ſentiments of love and gratitude for benefits recently received.

II. The next point to be conſidered in the objects of our charity is their *helpleſſneſs* ; their inability to remedy their own ſufferings without the aſſiſtance of others.

Although the diſtreſs of thoſe who apply to us may be both real and urgent, yet if by their own labour and induſtry they are able to extricate themſelves out of it, it is no concern of ours to do it for them. This therefore excludes from our notice much the greater part of thoſe idle vagrants who infeſt our ſtreets and houſes in ſuch amazing numbers, and who have taken up the profeſſion of BEGGING, only becauſe they are unwilling, though well able, to ſupport the toil of DIGGING ‡. The rule of ſcripture, as well as of common utility and common ſenſe, with regard to all ſuch miſcreants as theſe, is IF THEY WILL NOT WORK, NEITHER LET THEM EAT.†

And

* Luke x. 34. ‡ Luke xvi. 3. † II. Theſ. iii. 10.

And all that we have to do is to leave them to that wretchedneſs which is their own choice, and to that correction which the laws of the land very juſtly inflict upon them, for throwing a needleſs and a heavy burthen upon ſociety.

But when the poor ſufferer is both helpleſs and friendleſs; when he is not (as it ſometimes happens) entitled even to parochial relief, or is denied a ſufficient ſhare of it; when to the preſſure of exceſſive indigence is added an utter inability to remove it, through any defect of body or diſorder of mind, through pain or diſeaſe, the weakneſs of childhood and the infirmities of old age; and when to all this, perhaps, is added an uncommon ſcarcity of work, or ſeverity of weather, or dearneſs of proviſions, and a large family to ſupport, the calamity then becomes as great as can be. Then we are moſt loudly called upon to the exerciſe of our beneficence; we cannot heſitate a moment about the reality of the evil, or the obligations we are under to relieve it.

III. Where other things are equal, *meek and patient miſery* deſerves more regard than that which is bold, importunate and clamorous.

For

For they who are the leaſt worthy to receive, are generally the moſt forward to aſk; and that diſtreſs is often the deepeſt which is calm and ſilent. We are not, however, on that account to *reverſe* the rule of the text; and inſtead of giving to *every one* that aſks, make a reſolution of giving to *no one* that aſks. This would be taking a moſt unwarrantable liberty indeed with the words of ſcripture, and would be a very harſh and unchriſtian maxim to act upon rigorouſly, without any exceptions. There is a multitude of poor wretches who muſt either aſk for relief or periſh for want of it, and when this is the caſe, they *muſt* ſpeak and they ought to be heard: yet we may very eaſily diſtinguiſh the humble diffident petitioner from the obſtinate undaunted beggar, and may very allowably make a ſuitable difference betwixt them. But it would be a ſtill kinder and a ſafer way to make it our buſineſs ſometimes to ſearch out thoſe that ſupport their ſufferings quietly in privacy and ſolitude; to draw forth modeſt indigence from its wretched obſcurity, and to take at leaſt as much pains in diſcovering the unfortunate as they do in concealing themſelves.

IV. The laſt, but not leaſt important, circumſtance that demands our notice in thoſe that aſk relief, is *their piety and good morals.*

When

When, indeed, we ſee a fellow-creature in great miſery we muſt not ſuffer him to ſink under it becauſe his own vices and indiſcretions have brought him into it. He muſt be relieved; but with a prudent and a ſparing hand, till he ſhows ſigns of the ſincereſt repentance and reformation. And even then, perhaps, ſome diſtinction ſhould be made betwixt thoſe who, though penitent, have been old and grievous offenders, and them who have faithfully ſerved God from their youths. But moſt certainly the wicked and the good, when in equal want, deſerve a very different ſort of treatment. Were they to meet with the ſame, virtue and religion would be almoſt baniſhed from the lower part of the world, which ſtands in need of every poſſible encouragement to goodneſs of life: this encouragement the great and the wealthy have, beyond all others, the power to beſtow. They are the ſtewards and vice-gerents of heaven, appointed to rectify, in ſome meaſure, the preſent inequality in the diſtribution of worldly bleſſings. In their hands are placed the means not only of protecting the poor, but of giving countenance to virtue, and fixing a brand upon vice. It is a truſt repoſed in them for the general benefit of mankind; and if they neglect or abuſe this truſt, they will be, in a great degree, anſwerable for that apoſtacy and corruption of manners which would probably enſue.

We frequently employ puniſhments to deter the poor from doing wrong; let us try, ſometimes, what effect rewards will have in tempting them to do right. They are capable of being governed by their intereſt ſometimes, as well as their ſuperiors; and when they ſee that the idle, the diſſolute, the irreligious, the prophane, are left to ſuffer (in ſome meaſure at leaſt) the conſequences of their own conduct; whilſt they who labour hard to ſupport themſelves and diſcharge their duty conſcientiouſly towards God and man, never fail of meeting with the tendereſt compaſſion and moſt liberal relief; it will probably do more towards reforming their manners than any argument or expedient that has yet been tried.

Theſe ſeem to be the moſt material conſiderations that ſhould be attended to in ſettling the reſpective merits of the various candidates for our beneficence. And all that can be expected of us is, that we ſhould make the beſt enquiries concerning theſe points that we are able. If we have not leiſure or opportunity to obtain information ourſelves, we may eaſily apply to thoſe that have. Or if even this is too much trouble for us, there is a variety of public charities within our reach, where it is ſcarce poſſible for us to give amiſs. And this, by the way, is one excellent uſe, amongſt many others, of theſe benevolent

founda-

foundations, that they throw a ſelect number of truly indigent and deſerving perſons in the way of thoſe who have not time or inclination to examine the various pretenſions of particular claimants. It is, indeed, very eaſy to raiſe objections to every kind of charity, both public and private, that can be named, and there are ſome perſons ſo very hard to be pleaſed that they are perpetually enquiring after the beſt ſorts and propereſt objects of charity, without ever having the good fortune to find out one to their minds. But this is a mean and a ſcandalous artifice to evade a plain and moſt important duty. To a good intention let us join a moderate degree of care, and we ſhall ſeldom run any hazard of being deceived—Or if, after all, we ſhould, let us not be diſcouraged; it would be one of the moſt innocent and amiable errors of our life. And that unſuſpicious warmth of benevolence, which ſometimes lays itſelf open to abuſe, is, in the eye both of God and man, of much higher price than that extremely diſcreet, and cautious, and circumſpect virtue, which, through a pretended fear of doing harm, lets ſlip every opportunity of doing good.

But to ſatisfy you, that there is no danger of your bounty being miſapplied or abuſed in the preſent inſtance, I ſhall now proceed, (as I propoſed in the ſecond place)

to ſhow the ſeveral marks or criterions of deſerving indigence abovementioned, are all to be found in the charity which we are here met to promote.

The firſt of theſe marks was—*The greatneſs and urgency of the evil to be removed.* Now the evils which this houſe of refuge is calculated to redreſs, are all thoſe dreadful and complicated ones, both of a temporal and a ſpiritual nature, that almoſt unavoidably await a young female orphan turned looſe into the midſt of a great and corrupt metropolis, without money, without friends, without ability to ſupport herſelf by labour, without any principles of religion or habits of virtue, without either reaſon or experience to direct her. What now do you imagine muſt be the lot of a young creature thus unhappily circumſtanced? The probability plainly is, either that ſhe will periſh, for want of help; or that ſhe will pick up a ſhameful and wretched ſubſiſtence by begging or pilfering; or that ſhe will fall into the hands of one of thoſe infamous proveditors of vice, who are perpetually upon the watch to enſnare unguarded and unſuſpecting innocence. That this will *always* be the caſe, I do not pretend to ſay: but that it may, and that it frequently does happen, ſcarce any one, I preſume, will venture to deny. And is it not then an act of the higheſt humanity to reſcue a child

child, if we can, from the bare poſſibility of being trained up to a life of the moſt abandoned wickedneſs? Ought we not to ſtep in and ſave her from being made the victim of intemperance and diſeaſe, the ſport of wanton and capricious brutality, the nuiſance of ſociety, the bane of health and youth, the deſtroyer of private induſtry, of domeſtic comfort, of national population; from becoming at length the ſcorn and outcaſt of the ſpecies, and paſſing, by a gradual progreſſion in guilt, from that natural ſoftneſs and delicacy of mind which are the brighteſt ornaments of the ſex, to that ſhameleſs inſenſibility of ſoul, that entire diſſolution and profligacy of manners, which are the reproach of human nature?

To obviate, as far as is practicable, theſe dreadful calamities, the Aſylum was founded. It finds the deſerted orphan in the center of vice and corruption; finds her, perhaps, in that very critical deciſive moment on which her whole future deſtiny turns; and ſeizing haſtily on her hand, (as the ANGELS did on that of LOT when he LINGERED IN SODOM)* conducts her inſtantly to a ſecure retreat, where ſhe is protected from every natural and moral calamity; is lodged and cloathed in a plain and comfortable manner; is fed with FOOD CONVENIENT FOR HER;† is

* Gen. xix. 16. † Prov. xxi. 8.

is furniſhed with juſt ſo much knowledge as will make her uſeful to ſociety and wiſe unto ſalvation; is, at a proper age, ſent out into the world, fraught with all the principles of a good chriſtian, and the moſt eſſential qualifications of an inferior ſervant, and placed in ſuch reputable and virtuous families, as will give her an opportunity of improving both to the beſt advantage.

The next thing recommended to your conſideration in camparing the pretenſions of different claimants was—*their helpleſſneſs*—their inability to remedy their own ſufferings.

And where can this inability poſſibly ſubſiſt in a higher degree than in children of ſo tender an age as thoſe you here ſee, bereft of both their parents, without any known ſettlement, that is without any home to go to, and without any means of providing one. The bare repetition of theſe wants is ſufficient to prove their reality, and the abſolute impoſſibility of their being removed by thoſe that feel them, without the aſſiſtance of others. Chilhood is not a thing that can be counterfeited, and one of its inſeparable characteriſtics is *helpleſſneſs*. The very idea of it implies a total incapacity to procure the means of preſent ſubſiſtence, or the knowledge requiſite for immortal happineſs.

This

This incapacity muſt in the weaker ſex of courſe be greater; and when the natural remedy of it is taken away, by the death or deſertion of the parents, and the legal one fruſtrated by the want of a ſettlement, the diſtreſs is then extreme, and the only reſource for it is evidently in the kind ſupport of the humane and liberal.

Another criterion of real want, to which I directed your attention, was *the modeſty and patience which accompanied it*.

The claim of this young ſociety to theſe qualities will ſcarce be queſtioned. From their age and ſex we ſhould naturally expect them: and their appearance, we truſt, is ſuch as gives no room to doubt whether they actually poſſeſs them. Modeſty, meekneſs, humility, and patience are written upon their countenances, in characters too legible to be miſtaken. They have not ſo much as applied to you in their own behalf: they knew not how to do it: they knew not even the wretchedneſs of their own ſituations. Bold and ſhameleſs importunity belongs only to thoſe that have been trained up to idleneſs, and diſciplined to beggary. To how large a ſhare of it thoſe poor deſtitutes might have attained, had not you interpoſed, it is not eaſy to ſay. But through your kindneſs, they are either delivered from the

the danger before they were tainted; or, if their former wretched ſituation has had any bad effects on their hearts, they will here be carefully untaught whatever they have learnt amiſs. For the inſtruction here given them is not (as ſome have ſuggeſted) calculated to make them forward and inſolent, vain of their acquirements, and diſſatisfied with their condition. It is, on the contrary, kept within ſuch ſtrict bounds of propriety, and ſo judiciouſly intermixed with bodily labour, that it muſt have a quite contrary effect; muſt cheriſh all thoſe meek and ſelf-denying virtues, which are peculiarly ſuitable to the lowneſs of their ſituation and the gentleneſs of a female mind. It is confined almoſt entirely to the knowledge of their bible; where they are told by God himſelf, THAT THEY MUST NOT THINK MORE HIGHLY OF THEMSELVES THAN THEY OUGHT TO THINK,* BUT BE CLOATHED WITH HUMILITY;† THAT THEY MUST STUDY NO OTHER ORNAMENTS THAN THOSE OF A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT; ‡ OF SHAMEFACEDNESS AND SOBRIETY; || THAT THEY MUST LEARN IN SILENCE WITH ALL SUBJECTION; § MUST LABOUR WITH THEIR HANDS,+ MUST BE SUBJECT TO THEIR MASTERS

* Rom. xii. 3. † I. Pet. v. 5. ‡ I. Pet. iii. 4.
|| I. Tim. ii. 9. § I. Tim. ii. 11. + Eph. iv. 28.

MASTERS WITH ALL FEAR; * MUST IN PATIENCE POSSESS THEIR SOULS; † AND IN WHATEVER STATE THEY ARE MUST LEARN TO BE THEREWITH CONTENT. ‡ This knowledge is not of that kind WHICH PUFFETH UP; ‖ it is plain, practical, and uſeful. It will make them WISE, not IN THEIR OWN CONCEITS, § but only TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD AND SIMPLE CONCERNING EVIL.**

The laſt thing ſpecified as highly proper to be regarded in thoſe whom we relieve, was *innocence and goodneſs of life.*

The tender years of childhood, it muſt be owned, are not capable of producing any eminent or active virtues; and thoſe good qualities which diſplay themſelves at ſo early a period, are rather to be conſidered as the gifts of nature than the reſult of principle or choice. But ſtill theſe qualities, wherever we find them, and from whatever ſource they flow, are truly valuable and worthy our regard. And in fact there is ſcarce any one to be found of ſo cold and phlegmatic a diſpoſition as not to be pleaſed and charmed with the innocence and ſimplicity of a youthful mind. Our Saviour himſelf ſeemed to take a peculiar

* I. Pet. ii. 18. † Luke xxi. 19. ‡ Philip. iv. 11.
‖ I. Cor. viii. 1. § Rom. xii. 16. ** Rom. xvi. 19.

delight in young children, and treated them always with ſuch affectionate condeſcenſion and tenderneſs, as muſt at once give us the higheſt idea of his humanity, and impreſs us with the ſame benevolent ſentiments towards the ſame objects. When ſome of the people that followed him, ſtruck with the amazing proofs of his divine power, and urged by the natural impulſe of parental fondneſs, brought their children to be bleſſed by him, his diſciples with a harſh and ill-judged officiouſneſs, REBUKED and would have ſtopped them. But the merciful Jeſus, when he ſaw it, WAS MUCH DISPLEASED, AND SAID UNTO THEM, SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT, FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD. Then, with infinite complacency and good-nature, HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS, PUT HIS HANDS UPON THEM, AND BLESSED THEM.† From this moſt ſtriking inſtance of his ſenſibility we may eaſily conceive what the movements of his ſoul and the expreſſions of his kindneſs would have been, had ſuch an aſſembly of friendleſs orphans as are now before you, been preſented at once to his view. In this then, as well as all other inſtances of right diſpoſition, LET THE SAME MIND BE IN US WHICH WAS IN CHRIST JESUS.‡ It is plain that he conſidered the gentleneſs and docility, the frankneſs and ſincerity, the guileleſſneſs

† Mark x. 13—16. ‡ Phil. ii. 5.

neſs and humility of childhood, not only as the moſt eſſential qualifications for the kingdom of heaven, but alſo as peculiar recommendations to the kindneſs and compaſſion of men. And ſo they moſt certainly ought to be. For though they do not conſtitute a compleatly moral character, (and where indeed is ſuch a one to be found?) yet they form an innocent and engaging one, which, when joined to extreme want, muſt moſt powerfully work on every compaſſionate mind. One thing, at leaſt, they aſſure us of; that in beſtowing our alms on theſe orphans, we are doing no harm; we are not giving any countenance to vice, or diſcouragements to virtue: on the contrary, we are taking the moſt effectual means to foſter and mature the ſeeds of the one, and to ſtifle the growth of the other. We are conducting this little people into the road of religion and happineſs, which otherwiſe, probably, they would never have found; and are laying thoſe foundations of induſtry, temperance, frugality, contentment, obedience, piety, and true chriſtian faith, on which their ſucceſs in this life, and their ſalvation in the next, through the merits of their redeemer, muſt entirely depend. Nor is it their own welfare only that we are promoting, but that of the public too. For though theſe children do not contribute much to the opulence of the nation, by encreaſing the number of its manufacturers, (a ſpecies of labour from which their very

ſex in a great meaſure excludes them) yet they contribute greatly to the preſervation and enjoyment of that opulence, by encreaſing the number of honeſt and induſtrious ſervants. And when it is conſidered how much not only the peace and good order of families, but the ſecurity of their properties, and even the ſafety of their lives, depend on the diligence and honeſty, the veracity and ſobriety, the care and fidelity of their domeſtics; and how extremely difficult it is now become, to find out ſuch as may be thoroughly relied on in thoſe important articles; an inſtitution that tends to improve the principles and the morals of this moſt uſeful and neceſſary claſs of people, muſt ſurely be conſidered as a very conſiderable acceſſion to public happineſs.

Having thus endeavoured to ſhow that all thoſe properties which ſhould recommend any charitable deſign to our notice are to be met with in this, I leave what has been ſaid to your moſt ſerious conſideration; and have no doubt but that the plain and ſimple repreſentation of facts, which has been laid before you, will ſpeak with ſufficient force to the natural tenderneſs of your hearts. It is far from being my inclination, were it in my power, to make uſe of any art, in order to excite your pity on this occaſion; or to draw from you any expreſſions of your benevolence

which

which in your cooleſt moments you would not moſt entirely approve. On the contrary, I entreat you to conſider, in the calmeſt and moſt diſpaſſionate manner, the pretenſions of theſe orphans to your favour, and to weigh with the utmoſt deliberation, the real merits of their cauſe. They appeal to your judgments rather than your paſſions, and are willing to ſubmit their claim to your ſevereſt ſcrutiny. In them you plainly ſee ſuch an aſſemblage of pitiable circumſtances as ſcarce ever ſubſiſt together in the ſame ſubject. Their age, their ſex, their poverty, their deſtitution, their innocence, their helpleſſneſs, conſpire to mark them out as the perfect emblems of want, as planted almoſt by the hand of Providence itſelf under your immediate protection. In contributing to their ſupport you are probably ſaving ſo many of your own ſpecies (to the greateſt part of you I may ſay, ſo many of your own ſex) either from periſhing in the ſtreets, or what is next to it, languiſhing under parochial relief, or what is worſe than both, taking refuge in proſtitution. The retreat here provided for them is, at the leaſt, better than the very beſt condition they would have been in without it. Its greateſt enemies have allowed it to be *harmleſs*; its friends may therefore ſafely venture to go one ſtep farther, and affirm that it is *uſeful*; eſpecially as they know that every means which human prudence can ſuggeſt are employed to make it ſo. It wiſely adopts that method,

which

which is always moſt eligible where it is practicable, of preventing diſorders rather than curing them, of deſtroying them in their firſt principles, rather than removing their confirmed effects. The relief it affords is of the moſt beneficial and comprehenſive nature, giving ſecurity from immediate danger, and making proviſion againſt future evil; ſupplying urgent wants, and laying the foundation of laſting happineſs; implanting principles of religion, and habits of induſtry; promoting at once the intereſts of this life and the next; the welfare of individuals, the comfort of private families, the peace and good order of ſociety. At the ſame time the application of all theſe benefits is made with ſo diſcreet a hand, and guarded with ſo cautious a reſerve, that this eſtabliſhment keeps entirely clear of all thoſe objections that have been ſometimes made to public charities, and gives no reaſonable ground by the GOOD IT DOES TO BE EVIL-SPOKEN OF.* In fact, the experience of fifteen years has ſhewn it to be attended with no bad effects, and with many good ones; and the behaviour of far the greater part of thoſe who have been ſent out of it into the world has hitherto anſwered the moſt ſanguine wiſhes of their benevolent ſupporters.

No wonder, then, that the countenance which this charity has met with is ſuch as might naturally be expected from

* Romans xiv. 16.

from its approved utility. For it is to this alone, not to fancy or faſhion, to humour or caprice, that its great ſucceſs is to be aſcribed. It did not (as is ſometimes the caſe) become on a ſudden, without any apparent reaſon, an immoderate favourite with the public. It was from ſlender beginnings, and by very gentle ſteps, that it arrived at its preſent flouriſhing condition. During its early years it was trained up in the ſchool of adverſity, and had at firſt many difficulties and dangers to contend with. But it roſe at length ſuperior to them all; and in proportion as its merits became more narrowly ſcrutinized and more generally known, it acquired every day freſh credit and ſtrength. Its proſperity is now, we truſt, eſtabliſhed on the moſt ſolid and permanent foundation; and the liberality with which it has for ſome time paſt been ſupported, does no leſs honour to the diſcernment and piety of its benefactors, than the wiſdom of its inſtitution does to thoſe who firſt planned it, and the propriety of its management to thoſe who now conduct it. There was nothing left for its moſt zealous friends to wiſh but for that illuſtrious patronage which it has juſt obtained; and which, there can be no doubt, will prove as auſpicious to this houſe, as we all know and feel it has been to the nation at large.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ASYLUM, or HOUSE of REFUGE,

(Situated on the *Surry* Side of *Weſtminſter-Bridge*)

For the Reception of ORPHAN GIRLS within the *Bills of Mortality*, whoſe Settlements cannot be found.

INSTITUTED in the YEAR MDCCLVIII.

THE purpoſe of this charity is to preſerve friendleſs and deſerted girls from thoſe dangers and misfortunes, to which their diſtreſſed ſituation expoſes them.

Although attempts to reclaim the vicious, already become nuiſances to ſociety, are, without doubt, laudable and deſerving of encouragement; yet, to anticipate the evil, by implanting in tender minds the principles of religion and virtue; by cultivating in them habits of ſobriety and induſtry; and thereby rendering them uſeful to the publick, as well as happy to themſelves, is certainly an act of the moſt exalted benevolence; and ſeems alſo a more practicable undertaking, in proportion as prevention is leſs difficult than recovery.

That the evils this charity aims at preventing are not chimerical may be eaſily evinced.

Almoſt infinite is the number of perſons in and about the metropolis, not only of the loweſt ſtations, but alſo of the moſt extreme indigence, whoſe children are frequently too numerous to receive maintenance, much leſs education, even from the ſtricteſt induſtry. And when the lives of the parents are ſhortened by intemperance or accident, which is often the caſe, their children are left totally deſtitute and helpleſs.

What then muſt become of the daughters of ſuch parents, whoſe ſettlements are extremely difficult to be aſcertained; eſpecially the Orphans of ſeamen and ſoldiers? Poor and ignorant as they are, they muſt be encompaſſed with every temptation; and neceſſity may make them proſtitutes, before their paſſions can have any ſhare in their guilt.

Add to this, that the fine features, frequently to be found in dirt and rags, are known to expoſe the poſſeſſors of them to ſtill greater hazards.

This

This is the kind of prey which the procureſs is moſt eager to devour; which ſhe trepans to her brothel, and ſubdues, by the vileſt arts, to her wicked purpoſes.

A ſituation ſo truly pitiable, cannot but affect the heart with the warmeſt feelings of humanity.

And although the dangers and diſtreſſes, to which ſuch little female deſtitutes are liable, might be placed in various other lights equally affecting, yet what has been already urged, it is hoped, will be ſufficient to convince the judicious of the utility of this deſign, and to engage the compaſſionate in its ſupport. We ſhall therefore dwell no longer on the repreſentation of the evil; but ſhew what ſteps have been taken to prevent it.

GENERAL MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES.

A Preſident, ſix Vice-preſidents, and a Treaſurer, are appointed; and twenty of the Guardians to form a Committee, to meet once a month at the Aſylum, or oftener if neceſſary, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, to ſee to the execution of ſuch rules and orders as may be made at the general quarterly meetings, which are to be held, for auditing the accounts, and other material buſineſs, on the

ſecond Thurſday in January, on the firſt Thurſday in April, (except the ſame fall in Eaſter-week, and then the Thurſday following) and on the firſt Thurſday in July, and October; of which notice is to be given by public advertiſement; and to the Committee by letter.

The Committee to be named annually; and, if any difference of opinion ariſe, the election is to be determined by ballot.

The Preſident, Vice-preſidents, and Treaſurer are of every Committee. And notwithſtanding particular Gentlemen are annually named, for the more immediate conduct of this charity, yet every Guardian, who pleaſes, may attend and vote at the Committees.

VISITING LADIES.

The Guardians, being deſirous that no means ſhould be wanting to promote the laudable purpoſes of this inſtitution, and conſidering the Ladies as highly capable of aſſiſting therein, have requeſted the favour of ſuch as are Subſcribers, to viſit and inſpect into the œconomy of the houſe; to examine into the employment of the children, and all ſuch things as relate to the training them

up

up for uſeful houſewifely ſervants; and to communicate to the Committee, by letter, ſuch obſervations as may ſeem to them neceſſary.

CHAPLAIN.

A Chaplain who reſides in the houſe, is appointed to read prayers and preach a ſermon twice every Sunday throughout the year; viz. at a quarter after eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and at a quarter after ſix in the evening; and in the latter ſervice, to catechiſe the children: and to ſuperintend the conduct of the family; and to promote, by every means in his power, the Benefit of the Charity.

SECRETARY AND COLLECTOR.

A Secretary and Collector is appointed to attend all the meetings of the Guardians, to take down the minutes of their proceedings; to ſummon Committees; to collect the ſubſcriptions, and receive contributions; and to make the neceſſary enquiries into the circumſtances of ſuch objects as ſhall be preſented for admiſſion into this charity.

WRITING-

WRITING-MASTER.

A writing-maſter is alſo appointed to attend twice a week, to teach the twenty ſenior girls to write, and to caſt up a ſum in addition.

QUALIFICATION OF GUARDIANS.

The qualification of an annual Guardian, is a yearly ſubſcription of Three Guineas, or upwards.

The qualification of a perpetual Guardian, is a ſubſcription of Thirty Guineas, or upwards.

Ladies ſubſcribing as above, are entitled to vote at all elections of officers of the houſe by proxy, ſuch proxy being a Guardian, or by letter ſpecifying the perſon whom they approve.

Gentlemen and Ladies, who have ſubſcribed leſs than Thirty Guineas, by increaſing their laſt ſubſcription to that ſum, within the year, will be admitted as perpetual Guardians.

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTS.

The objects are orphan girls, bereft of both their parents, from the age of nine to twelve years, having reſided at leaſt ſix months within the bills of mortality, whoſe ſettlements cannot be found: but if it ſhall at any time appear, that a girl has been brought into places within the ſaid Bills, in order to qualify her in reſpect to reſidence, ſhe will thereby be rendered incapable of ever receiving the benefit of this charity.

And as the ſaid objects are to be conſtantly employed in the ſeveral offices of good houſewifery, in order to qualify them for domeſtic ſervants, deceaſed or infirm children cannot be received. And the Phyſician, Surgeons, and Apothecary, are therefore to be ſummoned by the Secretary to attend at the times of admiſſion.

diseased

RULES FOR THEIR ADMISSION.

That no children be admitted, but by order of a quarterly, or ſpecial, general court, to be ſummoned by advertiſement for that purpoſe.

That

That the Guardians preſent, according to the priority of their ſubſcriptions; but that no annual Guardians have a right to preſent, till after the payment of a ſecond ſubſcription of three guineas, or upwards: and unleſs the ſubſcription be regularly kept up, or the arrears paid, they loſe the right of preſentation.

That thoſe Guardians who are to preſent, have notice thereof by letter from the Secretary; and that the objects preſented be produced to the Committee; and bring a certificate, as follows; or give other ſatisfactory proofs where ſuch certificate cannot be had.

To the PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS *and* GUARDIANS *of the* ASYLUM.

We, whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, do certify that A. B. the bearer, being, as we believe, between the age of nine and twelve years, has no known ſettlement; that ſhe reſides in our pariſh, and appears to be in a very diſtreſſed condition, having neither father nor mother living, nor friends to ſupport her: and therefore recommend her as a proper object of your protection.

Day of 177

{ Miniſter.

{ Churchwardens.

{ Overſeers.

{ Pariſhoners of the pariſh of

That

That if any object be deemed unqualified, the Guardians who preſent them, be immediately acquainted therewith.

That if a Guardian does not preſent before the enſuing quarterly meeting, according to priority, and the rules above-mentioned, the next in turn take the preſentation: but that the former nominate at the ſucceeding admiſſion.

THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

They are to make ſhirts, ſhifts, and table-linen; to do all kinds of plain needle-work; to knit ſtockings and garters, whenever there ſhall be no public work in the houſe, nor linen of their own to make; and to perform the buſineſs of the houſe and kitchen; to which latter, four are appointed weekly, according to their age and abilities; to aſſiſt the cook, to waſh, iron, and get up all the linen, which is alſo made and mended by themſelves, who are thus trained up for uſeful domeſtic ſervants, and are not put out till they have acquired the following qualifications, viz.

To produce to the Committee a ſhirt cut out, made, waſhed and ironed by their own hands.

To be able to cut out and make their own linen, to clean rooms, and make beds; to underſtand plain cookery, and to clean kitchen, and other houſhold furniture.

To read a chapter in the Bible, write a legible hand, and caſt up a ſum in addition.

N. B. The ten ſenior girls are kept in a ſeparate claſs, in order to be more fully inſtructed in the above qualifications, and are diſtinguiſhed on Sundays by a white cuff on their gowns.

Shirts, ſhifts, table-linen, and all kinds of plain needle-work, are taken in at the Aſylum, and performed by the children at the following rates, viz.

		£.	s.	d.
A full trimmed ſhirt or ſhift, at	—	0	2	0
A plain ditto, at	—— ——	0	1	6
A ſervant's ditto, at	——	0	1	0
A large table-cloth, at	——	0	0	6
A ſmall ditto, at	—— ——	0	0	4
Fine napkins, at } per dozen	——	0	1	6
Common ditto, at }	— —	0	1	0

Fine

		£.	s.	d.
Fine ſheets, at	per pair —	0	1	6
Common ditto, at	per pair ———	0	1	0
Fine pocket handkerchiefs, at	per dozen -	0	1	0
Common ditto, at	per dozen -	0	0	6

And coarſer work of every ſort done proportionable cheap.

MANNER OF PLACING THEM OUT.

The objects thus trained are to be bound apprentices for ſeven years, at the age of fifteen, or ſooner, if qualified, and required by perſons approved of (and who are to appear themſelves, unleſs ſuch appearance be diſpenſed with) by the Committee, as domeſtic ſervants in reputable families, reſiding in Great Britain: the greateſt care being taken by the Guardians to enquire into the characters of maſters and miſtreſſes before the children are entruſted to them.

But, if there ſhall at any time be in the houſe a girl or girls, who may have contracted ſuch diſeaſes or infirmities as may render her or them incapable of the labour of domeſtic ſervice, the Committee is empowered to put out ſuch girl or girls to any trade they ſhall think proper, with a premium not exceeding Ten pounds.

The Committee is alſo empowered to expend, in ſuch cloathing as ſhall be found neceſſary, a ſum not exceeding Five pounds, for the uſe of any child apprenticed from this charity, who ſhall apply for the ſame, produce to the Committee a certificate ſigned by her maſter or miſtreſs, or both if living, of her faithful ſervice during her apprenticeſhip, together with a catalogue of the apparel ſhe is poſſeſſed of at the expiration of the ſame, ſigned alſo by her maſter or miſtreſs, or both, as above.

BANKERS AND RECEIVERS.

Meſſrs. BACKWELL and Co. Pall-mall.
Meſſrs. COUTTS and Co. Strand.
Meſſrs. DRUMMOND, Charing-croſs.
Meſſrs. HANKEY, Fenchurch-ſtreet.
HENRY HOARE, Eſq. and Co. Fleet-ſtreet.
The COMMITTEE, which meets as above.
The Rev. FRANCIS KELLY MAXWELL, at the Aſylum, Treaſurer and Secretary.

FORM OF BEQUESTS.

Item. I give and bequeath unto A. B. and D. E. the ſum of upon truſt, and to the full intent that they, or one of them, do pay the ſame out of my

my perſonal eſtate, to the Treaſurer or Treaſurers, for the time being, of a Society who now call themſelves the Guardians of the Aſylum, or Houſe of Refuge (ſituated on the Surry-ſide of Weſtminſter-bridge) for the Reception of Orphan Girls, reſiding within the Bills of Mortality, whoſe ſettlements cannot be found: which ſaid ſum of

I deſire may be applied towards carrying on the charitable deſign of the ſaid Society.

N. B. Bequeſts of land, or money, or ſtocks, to be laid out in land, will be void by the Mortmain Act.

A General

A GENERAL ABSTRACT of RECEIPTS and DISBURSEMENTS, from the Inſtitution of the ASYLUM, March 14, 1758, to December 25, 1771.

RECEIPTS.				DISBURSEMENTS.		
£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
26752	6	5¾		26599	1	11¾
			Balance	153	4	6
26752	6	5¾		26752	6	5¾

1772.

£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
6404	10	11		5969	18	0
			Balance	434	12	11
6404	10	11		6404	10	11

Children admitted	361	Children placed out	181
		Deceaſed	20
		In the Houſe - -	160
	361		361

FINIS.

Lately publiſhed by the ſame Author.

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THEIR MAJESTIES,

AT St. JAMES'S CHAPEL.

The THIRD EDITION Corrected.

Printed for T. PAYNE at the Mews-gate; and J. and T. MERRIL at Cambridge.